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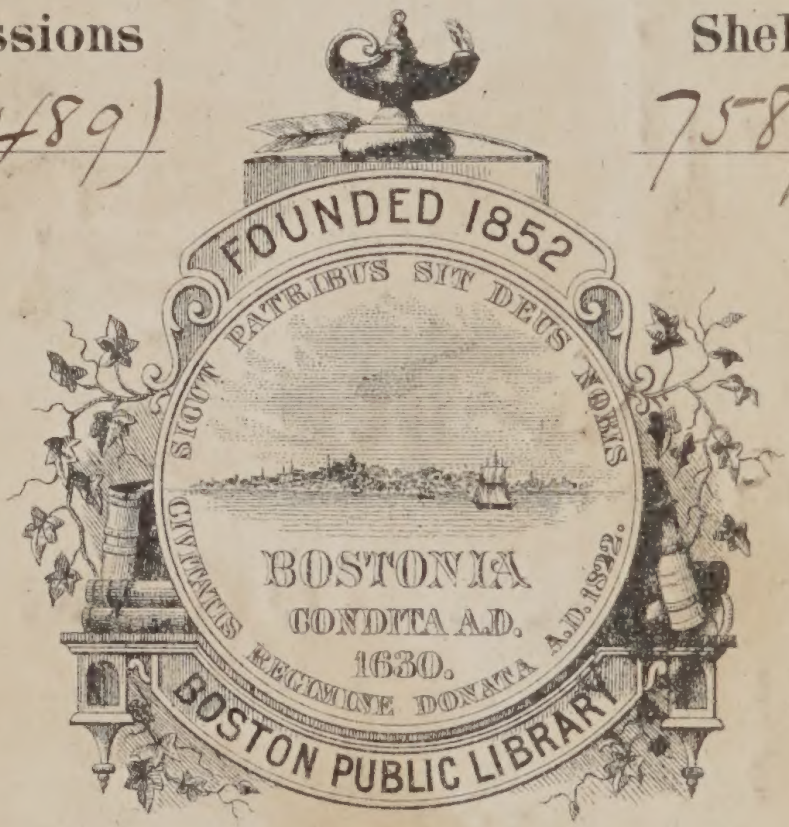

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Polished Diamonds.

BY

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CONTENTS.

Page.

I.

MARY BRACE TODD - - - - - - - 5

II.

GRINDING THE DIAMOND - - - - - - 22

III.

THE PEARL OYSTER - - - - - - - 30

IV.

CRUTCHES IN THE GARRET - - - - - - 37

V.

THE LAST FUNERAL - - - - - - - 44

VI.

HEAVEN - - - - - - - - - - - 51

POLISHED DIAMONDS.

I.

MARY BRACE TODD.

JUST as the night begins to pass away, and the light of a new day to spread over the earth, the father stands at the fresh grave of his child, with a little wreath which he has woven to lay on that grave, but hesitating, whether what looks dim to him in its colors will not seem too bright to others. Shall he leave it, or carry it back? O reader, whether you admire

it or despise it, you won't trample on it, will you?

When the new-born child, fresh from God, is sent to a family, the hearts of the parents thrill; but not exactly alike. The father receives the little *daughter* with emotions of inexpressible tenderness. She is the father's joy. Is it because the instincts of his heart teach him that she is peculiarly helpless, and one whose destiny can not be marked out by herself, and she mutely appeals to all that is manly and generous in him to protect and love her? The mother receives the little *boy* as something noble,—something that may be a mother's pride hereafter. Is it because her semi-instincts teach her heart that he may hereafter become a

"beautiful staff" on which the weak may lean, as she hath learned to lean on such a one?

I am sitting alone in my study. No human being knows what I am doing or thinking. I go back, or, rather, the past comes to me; and I see a little prattler, bright, full of life, very old of her age, filling all my home with sunbeams. I see her coming home from a neighbor's with the little basket on her arm full of duck's eggs, which, characteristically, she will not part with till she has seen them safely deposited under a sitting hen. I see her, as I used to stand at the door, and watch her little form clothed in scarlet merino, twirling her little satchel with one hand, and with a mother's care

leading her little sister as she returned from school. I see her little hands arranging her gifts and treasures in the little red book-case, which, with my own hands, I made for her, — arranged with consummate skill; and there in my upper entry it stands at this moment just as she fixed it long years ago! Not one thing injured, broken, or altered! Books were the only playthings that she really valued, unless it was to play the housekeeper, and "help mother." Was my heart unduly foolish, when in school, her bright, intelligent countenance, awake to every thing around her, her lessons clear and well understood, her enthusiasm in study almost irrepressible, was so plainly refreshing to the teacher, after being in

contact with dullness and stupidity? I never attempted in any way to stimulate or crowd her mind. It would have been like urging the horse so free that he would die sooner than slacken his gait.

I am thinking of a Sabbath evening, when, with much trembling, I ventured to appoint an "inquiry meeting:" as it seemed to me the Spirit of the Lord was among my people. In a dimly lighted room I met them, — and to my amazement, over thirty! I am thinking how I went up to a little girl who sat by herself weeping bitterly. Her head was down. I said, "My little one, do you so feel your sins that you feel the need of a Saviour?"

"I do, oh, I do!"

"Whose little girl are you?"

"Why, father, I'm your own Mary!"

My blood seemed to curdle cold in my heart. None but a father situated just like me can know my feelings. For weeks she remained in great distress of mind, and lay like a little boat rocked in storm, with no pilot to guide her into the harbor. I waded into the deep waters to reach and save my child; but my arm was too short. But I saw her led forth by a hand mightier than mine; and I followed after to see her come to land, and to sing of salvation on the shore. Hope gradually poured her warm, soft light into the soul, and darkness and distress were gone. The child received the kingdom of heaven as a little child; and from that hour

religion became interwoven into her character, and created a conscience as sensitive to all that was wrong, as the naked eyeball to the sunlight of noon.

I am thinking of the beautiful and wonderful school created in this place; of the many beautiful daughters educated there; and of this, my own, among the first who graduated, the first in her class; and of the Latin oration which she wrote, and which, most properly, was read by her teacher as the salutatory. And her school-days were over. She was in her eighteenth year, and, besides her English, she could read in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and German; and in all these, one perhaps excepted, she daily read the Scriptures

to the end of life. Homer was music as she read him.

I thought we had educated our daughter. But no! there were to be eighteen years more of education, such as no father's heart can recall without anguish, and whose end is beyond his comprehension.

She at once took her place in a very important position as a teacher; but in a few months returned home prostrate and sick. Then began a contest between sickness and health, life and death, which lasted through life. I soon found that her feet were growing heavy, and did not respond to the elasticity of youth; and my heart began to sink. A little after, slowly, slowly, the feet began to shuffle, — a very little. and

then to drag. Pains began to reveal their places of power, and the question now was, "Can she ever walk well?" When we carried her to this and that city, to this and to that "cure," and had consultations with the most skillful physicians, we were full of hope. For eight years she dragged herself around, taking hold of chairs, and banisters, and arms of friends. Hope never forsook her or us. But when, ten years ago, I returned from Europe, and found her in her wheel-chair, no longer able to walk, the last rainbow of hope on the clouds seemed to break and fall around her, whose fragments were never again to be gathered up.

I now see her in her chair-life, — eight years more, — having days of al-

ternate pain and relief, her hands never unemployed, her embroidery and skill the admiration of hundreds, her books always around her. She accomplished more in these eight years, in labor, in reading, in receiving friends, in earning money, often drilling young men preparatory to entering Yale College, and giving it in charity, than most do in sound health. Many a time have I wept over the ten-dollar note which she put into my hands for some religious charity, for I knew that not a stitch of the needle was taken to earn it, which was not accompanied by pain. Her judgment was so clear that we all trusted to it; her memory so tenacious that it never forgot a fact in its nicest accuracy: she was the ency-

clopædia whom we all consulted; and "Mary's room" was the common center of the family. It is now looking just as if waiting for her to come back. There are two large book-cases, so well filled with the choicest books, the pictures, and the great number of beautiful things placed there by one and another friend, that the room seems as no other one can. From that room radiated a cheerfulness and a strength of character that imparted hope and courage and contentment to all who visited it. How courageously her frail bark overrode every wave of sorrow! Hoping against hope, cheerfully submitting to the most severe remedial measures, and when medical skill had exhausted itself, and all but herself

were ready to despair, overlooking every thing but the possibility of success, with what enthusiasm would she submit herself to some new course of treatment! What teachings of patient courage and cheerful submission hath she given! O child of early promise, no hopes of childhood and of early youth were fulfilled to thee! God seeth not as man seeth. It was not thine in the schoolroom to train hundreds of minds, and mold character for the great duties of life and its eternal issues, or to lay still deeper the foundations for all that is great and good in the circle by whom thou wouldst have been called by the most endearing names known on earth; but God gave thee a mission, the mission of suffering,

to "suffer God's will." O weary, suffering child of mine, how sad but beautiful was the song of thy life!—

"I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my Guide!
With a childlike trust do I give my hand
To the mighty Friend by my side:
And the only thing that I say to him,
As he takes it, is, 'Hold it fast;
Suffer me not to lose my way,
And lead me home at last!'

"As when some helpless wanderer,
Alone in some unknown land,
Tells the Guide his destined place of rest,
And leaves all else in his hand;
'Tis home, 'tis home that I wish to reach;
He who guides me may choose the way:
And little I care what path I take,
When nearer home each day."

I recall, but dare not dwell on, the last year and a half, as she lay upon the

bed, and went through sufferings which it is not often given poor humanity to know; when "Mary's room" was the center of the love and tenderness of the whole family; and when so much of the brightness of our home was kindled around the couch of the sufferer, giving out light and cheer when the precious life was wasting away. I never heard a murmur or a repining that her poor life had been a wreck, and its mission left unrevealed.

I recall the last hour. How we hung breathless over her in our tears, after two months of the most excruciating pains, held in abeyance only by those powerful agencies which modern skill hath provided for the alleviation of sufferings, — when we felt that the

hand was near which was to lift the vail only enough for her to pass behind it! Shorter and shorter the breath came; and just as the moment had come for the promise, "It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light," the eyes that had been closed for days and nights opened, and gazed with a light, a beauty, and an expression of joy, such as I never saw before in a human countenance. If a thousand children of light had been revealed to her, and a thousand harps of heaven had burst upon her ear, the smile of life in death, of immortality in its triumphs, could not have been more decisive. She seemed to say, —

I hear a voice you can not hear,
That says, "No longer stay:"
I see a hand you can not see,
That beckons me away.

How I longed to pierce that vail which hid heavenly things from my poor earthy eyes! How I longed to know if the light of that world was just like ours, only brighter! How I longed to know if she carried with her our love, and will be sure and not "forget the house of her father!"

My poor suffering one is at rest. We have buried her. I was never aware that we did much or little for her while with us, but I can not now recall one thing more that we could have done for her. I sit alone and think. She seems to be going farther

and farther from me, and faster than I can follow. Shall I ever overtake her? When I come to the border-land, will she be far off?

I sometimes walk in the garden of Hope; and it seems as if I could see her form now and then gliding among the trees, and her face turned towards me, and saying, "Why, father, I'm your own Mary still!"

II.

GRINDING THE DIAMOND.

THE poor sufferer lay in severe pain on her bed. It was nearly twenty years since she had known a well day; more than half that time since she had walked a step; and nearly two years since she had sat up. Her limbs were jerked by spasms; her back had deep sores on it from lying so long; and, whenever one was relieved by a new position of the body, another would be made. She never complained; and the cheerfulness with

which she endured all this from day to day, and from year to year, was a matter of amazement to all. Her friends, who saw the Bible always lying near her, knew well from what springs she drew water. They all said it was one of the darkest providences they ever witnessed.

One night, as the sufferer lay sleepless from terrible pain, she began to look back upon the past. What a wreck life seemed, dating from her bright school-days! What a mystery that she must be so helpless and such a sufferer, while her school-companions could walk and move and act, and enjoy life! What was the object of her heavenly Father in putting her into this slow, hot, long-continued furnace?

As she lay there thus communing with herself, the room seemed suddenly to fill with light; and a beautiful form seemed to bend over her. His face was calm and gentle, but full of pity. She was not at all frightened, nor deemed it strange that he was there, though she was aware that she never saw him before.

"Daughter of sorrow!" said he in a voice soft as the zephyr that just rocks the rose on its stem, "art thou impatient?"

"No; but I am full of pain and disease, and I have so long been a sufferer, that I see no end to it, nor can I see why I must suffer thus. I know that I am a sinner; but I have hoped that Christ's sufferings, and not mine. would

save me. Oh! why does God deal thus with me?"

"Come with me, daughter, and I will show thee."

"But I can not walk."

"True, true! There, gently, gently!"

He tenderly took her up in his arms, and carried her away, far away, over land and water, till he set her down in a far-off city, and in the midst of a large workshop. The room was full of windows; and the workmen seemed to be near the light, and each with his own tools, and all so intent upon their work, that they neither noticed the new-comers, nor spoke to one another. They seemed to have small, brown pebbles, which they were grinding and

shaping and polishing. Her guide pointed her to one who seemed to be most earnestly at work. He held a half-polished pebble, which was now seen to be a diamond, in a pair of strong iron pinchers. He seemed to grasp the little thing as if he would crush it, and to hold it on the rough stone without mercy. The stone whirled, and the dust flew, and the jewel grew smaller and lighter. Ever and anon he would stop, hold it up to the light, and examine it carefully.

"Workman," said the sufferer, "will you please to tell me why you bear on and grind the jewel so hard?"

"I want to grind off every flaw and crack in it."

"But don't you waste it?"

"Yes; but what is left is worth so much the more. The fact is, this diamond, if it will bear the wheel enough, is to occupy a very important place in the crown which we are making up for our king. We take much more pains with such. We have to grind and polish them a great while; but, when they are done, they are very beautiful. The king was here yesterday, and was much pleased with our work, but wanted this jewel in particular should be ground and polished a great deal. So you see how hard I hold it down on this stone. And, see! there is not a crack or flaw in it. What a beauty it will be!"

Gently, gently the guide lifted up the poor sufferer, and again laid her

on her own bed of pain. "Daughter of sorrow! dost thou understand the vision?"

"Oh, yes! but may I ask you one question?"

"Certainly."

"Were you sent to me to show me all this?"

"Assuredly."

"Oh! may I take to myself the consolation, that I am a diamond, and am now in the hands of the strong man who is polishing it for the crown of the great King?"

"Daughter of sorrow! thou mayest have that consolation; and every pang of suffering shall be like a flash of lightning in a dark night, revealing eternity to thee; and hereafter thou

shalt 'run without weariness and walk without faintness,' and sing with those who have 'come out of great tribulation.'"

III.

THE PEARL OYSTER.

IN the bright sand, far down in the deep waters, near the island of Ceylon, lay a young pearl oyster. It was surrounded by a large family of brothers and sisters, and was as happy and joyous as an oyster could be. The beams of light came glancing down upon him from the upper world, just as bright as his eyes could bear. The dark waves rolled over his head, and beat upon the island with a thundering roar; but they never troubled him. Ships sometimes scudded across

his vision under their storm-sails, but, whether wrecked or safe, gave him little or no anxiety. If the hungry fish came prowling round, he nestled deeper in the sand, and was safe. So full of life was he, that, had he feet, he doubtless would have danced for joy. So he lived and grew the very pride of his family.

But one day he suddenly felt a sharp pain dart through him.

"Oh! what is that?" cried he. "I never felt any thing like it. Has some young sword-fish stuck his sharp sword into me?"

"Alas! my child, said his mother, "I know well what it means. You have an incurable disease growing upon you. Oh that the angel of the

waters would pity you and spare you!"

"Shall I feel it again, mother?"

"Yes: again and again. But you will learn to bear it; and the trouble will come upon you so gradually, that you will learn to suffer."

From that day, the poor oyster never had an hour free from pain. Gradually these pains came, and with increasing power; but he soon learned to bear them, and even to smile, and speak cheerfully. Tenderly the poor mother ministered to him and comforted him. But it was soon found that there was something growing near his heart that was very hard. It seemed like a small, round stone at first; but it was covered up that nobody could see it. All the doctors far and

near came and prescribed, and guessed what it was, but could afford no relief. It was noticed, too, that the angel of the waters came often, and looked upon the poor sufferer; and every time he did so the pains increased. It seemed as if he wanted to increase them, as no doubt he did. Sometimes he would touch him with his finger, sometimes turn him over, and sometimes hint to the physician to give the very medicine that made the sufferings greater. Poor, helpless one! there he lay, year after year, growing larger, and the lump near his heart growing larger and harder, and the pains ever increasing.

At last the poor oyster was worn out by pains, and died; and, as he breathed his last, a pearl-diver came down and

seized him, and put him into his little bag. Soon he shot up again to the world above the waters, and entered the boat that was waiting for him. And now they opened the shell, and, lo! all was explained. Within the shell was a magnificent pearl, bright as a silver rainbow. It was the largest ever found in those waters. Carefully they carried it away. And now it was known that it cost all those sufferings and agonies to make that pearl. The angel of the waters had made them all to go into that pearl; and not an agony could have been less and have the jewel so perfect. It was carried at once to the crown jeweler, and now adorns the head of the queen. No other pearl can compare with it.

Oh the wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God! He can take the pains and the agonies of the sick one, and work them all into jewels which will sparkle in the crown of Christ for ever! All our sorrows and sufferings, and our very tears, will thus become a part of his own glorious crown. We wonder often that the good, the meek, are made to suffer so long and so fearfully; but, when we look upon the jewels which he thus makes up, we shall cease to wonder. Not one pang or sorrow could be spared, and have the jewels in his crown what they are.

O sufferer on the bed of pain! I have told thee the simple story of the way our Lord makes pearls for the crown of earthly monarchs; and, in

the same way, he is fitting thee to be a glory in his own diadem. Patiently, patiently suffer his will, and thou wilt hereafter see that it was all to make thee more glorious in the eternal kingdom.

IV.

CRUTCHES IN THE GARRET.

IN the further corner of the garret, I found a pair of old crutches. They were made of ash, very strong, very plain, and very much worn. Their tops show that the weary arm ground on them long and heavily. Their iron bottoms were battered and worn, showing that they must have taken the weight of the body for many years. The place where the hand clutched shows that it must often have clasped and moved the crutch. Where did the tree grow out of which these were

made? Did it stand in the forest? or out in the green lot by itself? Were these the only things made out of that tree? and is the rest of it all turned back to dust? Who made these crutches? Is the man living? or has the hand long since lost its cunning and been put in the grave? Did he think, as he was making them, that they would live longer than he should?

Above all, who was the poor cripple that suffered so long, and used these poor substitutes for legs? What was his history while hobbling through this life? and where did he die? and where is he now? Is he in that world where they shall "run without weariness and walk without fainting"? where "the lame shall leap as a hart," and the

inhabitant no more say, "I am sick"? Are ye the only memorials of that man? Say, old helpers, where is he?

"Ah! sir, we have stood here and listened and watched for years; but his form comes not to us, his voice breaks not in upon the silence."

"True, my good fellows, true. But, if you can't tell me any thing about the present condition of the sufferer whom you helped to carry about, you surely can tell me something about his earthly history."

"Well, that is briefly told. He was a bright child, with large, brilliant eyes, and gave every promise of meeting every hope of his parents. But, before he was old enough to walk much, he was struck down suddenly by a hand

that was never seen and a cause that was never known; so that the earliest memories of him reach a happy little fellow, limping around his father's door on his little red crutches. While the other children ran and leaped and shouted, he leaned on his crutches and enjoyed their joys only by sympathy. His mind developed fast and beautifully, so that early he became a great reader and an accurate scholar. Never having known the use of his feet, he never knew how great was his loss. But his crutches were a part of himself. They lay by him when he ate, and stood by his bedside when he slept. They went with him to church, to school, everywhere. And so he grew up. At a very early age he began to

feel that he was a sinner who needed a Saviour. He heard a voice saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary;' and the little fellow laid his weary spirit on the Saviour's bosom, and lifted it up in hope. From that moment his course was onward and upward. He went to college, and the crutches went with him. He came out the first scholar in his class. He entered the ministry, and the crutches went with him into the pulpit. He gave promise of being great and good. But now his mission was ended, and in less than a year his weeping flock laid him in his grave. *We* were his companions from the time he entered college till he died. We should have been willing to go with him; but we were not wanted,

and so here we stand and wait and listen. Will he ever come back to us? Has he forgotten us, his long-tried companions?"

"No, dear old crutches: he doth not need you there. He is no longer a cripple. 'He shall mount up as on eagles' wings.' He was not created for earth, and had little to do here, except to suffer God's will. You seem to wonder why you never hear his voice or see his form. The reason is, that it is God's plan, that, when our friends leave us, we shall more and more walk by faith, and not by sight. If the dead could appear to us, or speak to us, we should turn away from that 'more sure word of prophecy,' and feel that we must walk by sight. It

would destroy the harmony of the world. And you, faithful helpers! your mission has been to hold up a frail body in which the Holy Ghost resided, and to minister to a child of God, and help him to the very door of his Father's house. I don't believe his memory has failed, and so you may feel sure he hath not forgotten even his old friends, his crutches. Stand there still in silence, meek companions of suffering! I will not burn you nor remove you. And though *he* will never come to you again, as often as I see you I shall think of the past, and recall the image of the dear one, and look forward to the time when I hope to meet him again, 'where the weary are at rest.'"

V.

THE LAST FUNERAL.

AFTER a severely cold day, it is now night. The mountains around us are all covered with deep snows, and the winter winds pour over them in their strength. I am reviewing the day to see how I have spent it; and I find that the most important thing I have done is to attend the funeral of one of our lambs, a scholar in our Sabbath school. Very likely other schools have felt as we do, and other parents have mourned as these do, and

other funerals been as tender as this; but we know not their record. The dear one whom we have buried was between fourteen and fifteen years of age. The first kiss that greeted her was the kiss of parental love. She was the first-born, the first bright sunbeam that broke into their dwelling. She was received as God's gift, and early consecrated to Christ. She could not remember the first time she said the Lord's Prayer, nor the first time she knelt in prayer, nor the first time she heard of Jesus. She was a bright, cheerful, happy one, making herself and all around her happy; so mature in mind and judgment that she was almost as much a companion as a child.

Some are born with a natural grace and sense of propriety, are so quiet in all that they do, that we say of them, "She is a natural lady." What a blessing to have such a daughter to be the oldest child! How much she does toward forming the character of the other children, and making that family happy! She softens and molds the tempers of all, saves her mother many weary steps, and is the pride and joy of the father.

Our scholar was tenderly nurtured and instructed at home, and the good seed of the Word was sown in the morning and in the evening. It was accompanied by faith and prayer. In the Sabbath school, the care was constant and tender; and the heart of the

teacher and the child met often, and they understood each other. In the care with which she learned her lessons, in accurate and beautiful recitation, in ready comprehension of the Word of God, there was little to be desired. She never remembered when she was not a praying child; that is, when she did not "*say over*" her prayers. But months before the Lord called her away she had been in the daily habit of reading the Scriptures, and of pouring out her heart in her own words, casting little cares and troubles upon Him who listeneth to the cry even of the young raven. That blessed Spirit who enlightened David and Isaiah and Paul enlightened her, so that she understood the plan of salvation — all

that it is necessary to know — as well as a divine.

A soul that is enlightened by the Holy Spirit learns fast, and is taught correctly. This teacher makes no mistakes. And thus it is that a child often seems to ripen fast when the Master is preparing it for his own presence, just as the warm sun will often, in a few hours, cause the rose to swell and open, perfected in beauty. When the Great Father placed this child in the arms of her parents, fourteen years ago, he said, "Take this child and nurse it for me." But it took all these years to answer the question, "What manner of child shall this be?" When we looked in the coffin and saw the beautiful face upon which Death had placed

his signet so gently that he marred no beauty, except crushing out the brightness of the eye and the color of the cheek; when we looked upon what gave such promise of joy to all her friends, and such usefulness to others; when we saw the pure, white camellias lying around her, no fairer than the face; when we saw her Sabbath-school class, with their white badges of mourning, filling a very large sleigh, — we could mourn with those who mourn, and we could say to the parents, —

> "Christ will lay his hand
> Upon your heart gently, not smiting it;
> But as a harper lays his open palm
> Upon his harp to deaden its vibrations."

"Ah!" says my reader, "there are hundreds of such cases every year."

Very true; and if so, then hundreds of the young, the fair, the gifted, and the beautiful, finish their short mission to this world, and are ready for "the house not made with hands," and have been by the divine hand "wrought for this self-same thing." These flowers are taken up from our gardens, the dust and the soil of earth is shaken from them, and they are transplanted to bloom in the garden of the Lord for ever. Ah! but who will take their places? Who will be "baptized for the dead"? Who will come to Christ here, and serve the blessed Master, because there was a golden harp in heaven, and the hand that he appointed to strike it was the hand of our sweet ANNA DUTTON?

VI.

HEAVEN.

WE sometimes have a perfect winter's day. I was out about noon on such a day. The white snow lay soft upon the earth, covering every deformity, every inequality, and glistening like the robe of an angel. The sun rode low at the south, but sent his beams back bright and warm and gladdening. — The arch of heaven was a clear, deep blue, so pure that you could conceive

of nothing purer. Far in the horizon floated a few small clouds, just enough to remind one that such things remain still. The mountains around seemed to send up a warm tint of purple, and far at the north the soft clouds were covering the great mountain, as if pitying his cold brow. Not a sound was to be heard save the distant waterfall, and the crisping, craunching tread of my horse's feet beneath me. Not a breath of cold air troubled one.

And this, then, I said to myself, is the footstool of God! And this is when earth is in the very depth of winter! I can not tell, to be sure, what fires may be burning in the earth beneath: I can not tell what lies beyond the deep blue sky. But if this

is *earth*, what must *heaven* be? If this footstool be thus, what must his throne be? And supposing I were at this moment to die, where, the next moment, would my spirit be? Supposing I belong to Christ, where should I be, and what should I find, and what see and know? What should I find heaven to be? With my Bible in my hand, what do I know as to heaven? Negatively, then,

1. *I do not know* WHERE *heaven is.*

It may be that some star that sends its beams down to us is the center of the universe, and the home of the blessed. But I can not tell which star it is. It may be that it is too far distant for mortal eyes to see even its glimmer. It may be that it is not like a star, or

that it is ten thousand stars made into one. Should I go *up* or *down*, or is there no up and down for the spirit? Can I point this way or that way, and say, "There lies heaven?" *Where is it?* I can not tell.

2. *I can not tell* WHAT *heaven is.*

Is it arched overhead like this world? Is there solid substance on which they tread? What *do* they there? Shall I spend eternity only in worship and praise, or shall I have some employment, something to *do* for the good of others? Is it like Paradise, full of trees and flowing waters, fountains and flowers? Or are such beautiful things only thrown down to cover the footstool of God?

3. *I do not know* HOW *I can live out of the body.*

I have never moved, or looked, or listened, or thought, or felt, only as by using the body. How can I see when these eyes are closed in death? How can I hear when these ears are shut? How can I move without feet, speak without a mouth, live and breathe without our lungs, — how live without the body? I don't know; I can not tell. But I know that the angels live without bodies, and they worship, and they cry in the songs of heaven, and they minister to the redeemed on the earth, without bodies. *They* can hear without ears, and speak without tongues, and move without feet. And can not *I*? Can not I live without the body, though

I can not tell *how* it will be, as well as they?

4. *I do not know* WHO *are in heaven.*

There are angels there,—but I never saw them. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs,—but I never saw them. I know not their employments, or their joys, or their condition. What they were doing a thousand years ago, what doing to-day, what they will do with all their powers and faculties and attainments, I do not know. An old writer says, that, "if you reach heaven you will be surprised at meeting some there whom you did not expect to meet, and surprised more at finding some absent whom you did expect to meet, and surprised most of all in finding *yourself* there." What bright crowns

many will wear; and how, above the brightness of the sun, will those shine who have turned many to righteousness!

What then DO *I know of heaven?*

(a.) I know that heaven is a "*place.*" Some try to conceive of it as a *state*, a condition of feeling, and not any particular place. I am not made so. I believe heaven to be as really a *place* as any earthly city is a place. It is "a home," "a house," "a city," a something of which we can conceive. I know that material bodies are there. Moses and Elijah came to meet Christ in material bodies. Enoch went up with his body; so did Elijah; so did Christ; so, doubtless, did the saints who arose at Christ's resurrec-

tion. They are there now; and if I were to see one of those, I should as much expect to meet a material body as if I were to meet my neighbor. And material bodies must have a material place to live in, and heaven, I have no doubt, is a "place." "*Where* I am," says the Saviour, "there shall also my servants be." We read of our "hope laid up in heaven," of "entering into the holy *place*." "I go to prepare a *place* for you," says Christ. I know that no "*place*" would be heaven, without the heart being attuned to it, and I know that heaven must *chiefly* consist in the "state" of the soul; but, after all, though home is not home, unless the heart be in it, and friends are not friends merely because we are with

them, but chiefly because we love them, and though the Jews who were in the room with Christ were not really with him, and though Judas was at the same table with him without being really with Christ, yet, after all, heaven, to meet our wants and our very natures, must be a "place," as I have no doubt it is. We shall go to a "*place.*"

(b.) *I know many who are in heaven.*

I shall not be happy merely because there are a multitude there which no man can number; but because I shall meet those who were once here. I want to see Adam, the first-born of our race, and Abel, the first contribution of earth to heaven, and Moses, the mighty

one, and Samuel, the meek high priest, and David, whose harp now rings all over the earth, and Isaiah, whose visions are still unfolding, and Paul, with his "crown of righteousness," and John, the loving one, almost a seraph before death, — and I shall want to see them all. Yes, I shall want to see that father, that mother, those brothers, and sisters, and that child, who left me years ago to be with Christ. I know they are there. Shall I know them, think you? Yes, unless memory is annihilated, and the soul loses all her old faculties. Shall I remember the coffins I have wept over, the graves that I have mourned at, and the loved ones I have seen die, and not, also, know *them*, remember them again? I may be

amazed at their change, I may almost feel like falling down and worshiping the earth-born angel; but I am sure I shall know him. Ah, yes! I shall *know* them all. I shall know the archangel Michael, and the strong angel Gabriel, and the loving seraph; and I shall know that great multitude of the redeemed; and I shall walk again with my friends. I shall sit down with my children, for I know that they are all there. I shall meet again those whom I meet here at the table of Christ, and those whom he loved while they "sought a country." They are silent to-day; they may not speak to me now; they may not fan me with their wings now; they may not come out in visible form; they may not pass the

dividing line between time and eternity; but they are there to meet me. Wherever that home is, *they* are there to meet me, to welcome me. And I know, too, that they go no more out for ever. They have no separations there. And I know, too, that *He*, the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, — he who has redeemed a world with his own blood, who has had more hearts love him, more lips praise him, more cares cast upon him, more burdens brought to him, than all the created ones in the whole creation of God, — there is He, whose name hath been sung in every language under heaven, whose blood hath "sprinkled many nations," — there is Jesus, the crucified and the blessed One. I shall

"see him" as he is, and I shall become like him. I shall "enter into his joy," "awake with his likeness," "and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Were there no other being in heaven, that would be heaven to see Christ Jesus, our great High Priest, the Captain of our salvation.

(c.) *I know that they are happy in heaven.*

"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Take away all pain and sickness, and you have removed mountains of human sorrow. But there "they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. There shall be no more curse. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Figurative language, say you. True: but in what other language could heaven be described? We must use figures in describing heaven. We can do it in no other way. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And here the genius of David comes in, — the greatest poet that ever lived, with inspiration added; but even he could find no language sufficient to convey his expectations of heaven. "Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear

thee!" Goodness laid up! goodness so great that he can not describe it; so great that Peter calls it "an inheritance reserved in heaven for you." It is "rivers of joy at the right hand of God;" it is "an exceeding weight of glory;" it is "a crown of life;" it is "glory to be revealed;" it is "where the sun and the moon and the candle are not needed," for light from the throne illumines all; it is "being ruler over many things;" it is "being saved by hope" *now;* it is "possessing all things" *then.* We walk by faith *now; then* and *there* by sight. We taste the "first fruits" here, the full harvest there. We have the deed here signed and sealed, we have the "inheritance" there. Our hearts burn as Christ now

talks with us by the way ;—what will it be to see him, and be with him? God can pour himself into the soul here, so that the martyr does not feel the flames that consume the body.

You may ask me here: "Why don't we know more of heaven? Why do the voices that leave us remain so silent? Why don't they return and describe that country to us, and tell us that they love us still? Why does such awful silence brood over the grave?" I reply,—It is not probable that we could understand it, if the attempt should be made. Suppose the little worm creeping on the ground had an intellect out of proportion to his circumstances, as we may imagine ; could he be made to understand how

he can ever become a butterfly, and lift himself up from the earth, and live on flowers? Suppose a beautiful winged butterfly should go to him and say, "I am your mother, in my new state, and you will soon be with me, and we will rise and fly over rivers and houses and trees;" what could he understand of all this? Very likely as much as we could understand of heaven, were an inhabitant to break the silence, and try to make us comprehend it?

Besides, our condition here fits us only to use our senses. We are gross, and must deal with gross things. John could lean on the bosom of Christ, while the Saviour was in the body like ours; but he fell as a dead man when

Christ came to him in his heavenly garments. The disciples could talk with Christ daily, and men could talk of stoning Moses, and Jezebel could take an oath that she would kill Elijah; but when Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory," the disciples were overpowered; they were afraid; they were heavy with sleep; they talked like men who were dreaming. To live here with comfort, we must be just as we are. The eye can not bear light all the time, so we must have darkness and night. We can not bear all prosperity, and so we must have sorrows and pains. Should that "glory that is to be revealed," be revealed now; should we see the garments we are to be clad in, see the

crown that we are to wear, know the blessedness of that home,—how could we engage in the drudgery and the hard duties of life? Was the Queen of Sheba as well contented with her state after her heart fainted at seeing the glory of Solomon? Was Canaan any longer home to old Jacob, after he heard of the glory of Joseph? Was Daniel better qualified for duty and suffering, after communing with the angel at the river Chebar? No; we can not have any return from the dead. We do not need them, for we have "a more sure word of prophecy." Did the spirit of Samuel coming to Saul do him any good, or did he commit suicide the very next day?

In all his works and ways, God's

thoughts and plans are as much wiser than ours as they are higher. What if he don't send back your friend, your child, to witness your troubles, and to sympathize with your tears. To that child "the former things have passed away," and all earthly cares and sorrows are laid aside. Do you want the dead still to weep with you, and carry your cares even into heaven? You don't need it; for you can cast "all your cares" and "burdens," your sorrows and troubles upon him, the blessed Redeemer, "who careth for you," and who is given to you for this self-same thing.

Oh! reader, when we think of death, we think of the sick and dying room, of the sad funeral, of the dark, cold

grave. We don't think enough of "the glory that is to follow." In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, it will be all over, and the voice will cry, "Come up hither." What a load we drop! what immortality clothes us now! Darkness exchanged for light eternal, night for day, sorrow for joy, pain for pleasure, sighing for songs, weariness for strength, sin for holiness, for ever. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Such, dear reader, were my thoughts on horseback. May I hope they have been a comfort to you? Have I been

able to throw one ray of light beyond the grave, or one beam of hope into your heart? I thank God if I have.

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